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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 001521

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FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/02/2016

TAGS: PREL PARM WE IS XF KU

SUBJECT: KUWAIT DEMARCHE DELIVERED FOR GCC INFORMAL SUMMIT;
COMMENTS ON SINIORA VISIT

REF: STATE 68574

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) The Ambassador delivered reftel demarche to Ministry of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Khaled Al-Jarallah on May

¶2. The Ambassador placed special emphasis on the need for the GCC to embrace the new Iraqi government in both political and economic terms and thus act as a magnet countering Iranian influence. He noted the strong engagement of the USG in government formation and the need to include all communities and to make sure the ministers were capable and qualified. PolChief separately reviewed with National Security Bureau Office Director Shaykh Thamer al-Sabah an abbreviated version of the GCC talking points. He expressed appreciation and said he would pass the points to his superiors.

¶2. (C) Al-Jarallah appreciated the briefing and will pass on the written points and the oral briefing to the Foreign Minister. Al-Jarallah asked how long it would take for Iraq to form its new government. The Ambassador said it might be in place within 30 days. The Undersecretary stressed the importance of the new government not unfairly discriminating against certain sectarian groups, especially the Sunnis. Al-Jarallah agreed that having Ambassador Randall Tobias meet with the Arab Fund, the Kuwait Fund, and other funds in the Middle East to coordinate aid to Iraq was a good idea. (We are coordinating on this matter with the Arab Fund.)

Jarallah expressed interest in the U.S. view on a "very clear" statement from May 1 by Jalal Talabani that he had reached an agreement with various militia groups that would result in a decrease in the fighting.

¶3. (C) In response to the Ambassador's reftel points on sending senior officials to meet with GCC officials on Iran on the margins of the GCC meeting in Riyadh, Al-Jarallah asked if this was to deal with the nuclear issue. The Ambassador responded that the nuclear issue has attracted most of the headlines, but that it was just one part of Iran's overall policy of trying to expand its influence in the region. Al-Jarallah was curious as to whether the U.S. was talking to Iran, to which the Ambassador responded that we were not. The Ambassador went on to note that the U.S. was willing to back up its talk with defense cooperation, to which Al-Jarallah remarked that he had observed such cooperation with Bahrain. The Ambassador pointed out that the U.S. has worked with Kuwait and others on air defense, but that the dangers in the region meant the whole GCC had to cooperate and coordinate more.

Predicts Hamas will Moderate on Peace Process

¶4. (C) Al-Jarallah pointed to a Hamas statement May 1 that

it was open to the Arab peace initiative. He said it was a sign that it would become more cooperative, after its Foreign Minister heard a tough message during his recent tour of the region. Hamas would soon realize it has no alternative, he said. Ambassador said that he was under the impression that very little Gulf funding was actually going to Hamas. Al-Jarallah said that no Middle East banks wanted to be involved in handling transfers to Hamas.

Quick Visit by Lebanese Prime Minister

¶5. (C) Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora visited Kuwait for several hours on May 1. Al-Jarallah said that he complained a lot about Syria, noting the lack of response to his many overtures to visit his counterpart in Damascus. Nonetheless he will keep trying to reach out to the Syrians. Siniora was reportedly optimistic about the National Dialogue. Although Jarallah was not in a 30 minute private meeting between Siniora and the Amir, he said that he did not think economic issues played a prominent role in the talks. He said Siniora did express appreciation for the subsidized fuel being provided by Kuwait and asked for extension of that facility.

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